

SPEECH

OF

HON. J. R. GIDDINGS, OF OHIO,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 1850.

On the Bill establishing the boundaries between Texas and New Mexico, in connection with the President's Message on that subject.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the Civil and Diplomatic Bill—

Mr. GIDDINGS said, he desired to call the attention of the committee to the bill establishing the boundary between Texas and New Mexico, in connection with the President's message on that subject.

To the great joy of the northern people generally, as well as to a portion of those residing in the slave States, the "Compromise bill" has been defeated in the Senate. But while the public are rejoicing over that fortunate termination of eight months' labor of that body, they have suddenly sent us this bill, containing the most exceptionable features of the compromise. In fact, the bill now on your table is more objectionable in its provisions than the compromise itself. Senators who voted for striking these provisions from the "omnibus bill," have turned round and voted for them in the bill before us. And we are now told that they are to be carried through this body by "Whig votes." This rumor, I hope, may prove unfounded; time will soon disclose its truth or its falsehood.

I, sir, am entirely opposed to the bill, or rather to its two principal features; to wit: that which gives to Texas some forty thousand square miles of territory within the ancient boundaries of New Mexico; and that which provides for the payment to Texas of ten millions of dollars from our Treasury. My objections to each of these provisions are insuperable. This brings me to an examination of the proper boundaries of Texas.

All who are acquainted with Mexican history will, recollect that Texas and Coahuila, after they had been laid off into separate States or intendencies, were connected for legislative purposes. By reference to the Spanish maps of that day it will be noticed, that the States of Tamaulipas, Coahuila, and Chihuahua, extended far on this side of the Rio Grande—that river passing through and dividing each of those States, as well as that of New Mexico. In 1834 General Almonte, late Minister to this Government, was appointed a commissioner to establish the boundaries between Texas and Coahuila: he attended to the duties of his appointment, made the proper exploration, and reported the line separating these States to commence at the mouth of the "Aranso," which I believe is some thirty miles north of the Nueces, and following up the Aranso to its source; thence in a direct line to the confluence of the San Antonio and Medinas; thence up the latter stream to its source; thence in a westerly direction to the

southeast corner of New Mexico. This line merely separated these two States, leaving that which divided New Mexico and Texas as it had been long previously established. This report was confirmed by the Central Government of Mexico; and except for the revolution of Texas, there would probably have been no doubt or difficulty concerning her boundaries. The entire boundary between New Mexico and Texas, as laid down on all Mexican maps, was on the hundredth degree of longitude west from Greenwich. On this point I find no difference among the old authorities.

By a statute law¹ of 1836, Texas declared her boundary to be the Rio Grande, from its mouth to its source. Thus Texas attempted to embrace all that portion of these four Mexican States lying east of the Rio Grande, by authority of a mere declaration on paper. No man supposes this claim worthy of a moment's attention. It is, however, true that, so far as Texas actually extended her territory by conquest, she was entitled to maintain her jurisdiction. Thus the people living in the valley of the Nueces actually united with Texas in her revolution; and the settlement there, forming the county of San Patricio, actually constituted a part of Texas when General Taylor with his army arrived at Corpus Christi, situated near the mouth of the Nueces. In this way Texas, agreeably to the law of nations, had extended her legitimate boundaries from the Aranso south so far as to include the settlement on the Nueces. But to this settlement her authority was confined. She exerted no jurisdiction beyond that point.

Mr. HOWARD said that Texas had made surveys within twenty miles of Point Isabel before General Taylor reached Corpus Christi, and a Texan judge had charged the grand-jury that Texan authority extended to the Rio Grande.

Mr. GIDDINGS inquired if any Texan officer had served process, or ever made an arrest beyond the valley of the Nueces?

Mr. HOWARD admitted they had not.

Mr. GIDDINGS resumed. The mere assertion of a right to exercise jurisdiction, whether by the Legislature or by a judge, is of no importance. They constitute no evidence of title, whatever. There must be some *act*—some overt movement, to constitute a claim of title. Indeed, nothing short of continued possession, or open overt possession, taken with the ability to continue it, can give any title whatever. Her mere act of having made a survey within twenty miles of Point Isabel, and then leaving the country, gave Texas no more claim than it would to have gone there to hunt the buffalo or the deer. Whatever claim

Texas now holds to the Lower Rio Grande, is the actual possession which she has held over it since we conquered it. Up to the time General Taylor marched to Point Isabel, the Mexican custom-house there was kept up, and our citizens paid duties to the Mexican Government, precisely as we did at Vera Cruz, or any other Mexican port of entry. Point Isabel is situated some four miles east, or rather north of the mouth of the Rio Grande, and duties were there paid on all goods intended for Matamoros, Mier, Laredo, Monterey, and that whole inland region. But General Taylor conquered it as his army marched to Matamoros, and Texan officers followed him, and enforced Texan laws there. In this way, and in no other, has Texas gained possession of that region, which up to that time constituted a part of the State of Tamaulipas, and was known on the maps and by all geographers as such. Texas received possession from the United States, and as against us has no shadow of title to it. But I would avoid even the appearance of dealing harshly with Texas. I would yield her the utmost point to which her jurisdiction extended at the date of our treaty with Mexico. There I would stop. There I would draw the line between the State of Texas and the territory of the United States. This would give her the whole of that portion of Tamaulipas lying east of the river. But when she attempts to go further up that stream, she becomes a trespasser.

Mr. HOWARD said that Texas at several times had possession of Laredo, which is within the State of Coahuila, although she did not continue that possession until General Taylor's arrival.

Mr. GIDDINGS. If she surrendered her possession, she gave up her title of course, and now has no claim to it. But if her possession of Laredo had continued, and her title there were valid, it would not, in any degree, affect my argument. I would place the line above every point where Texas ever had the color or pretence of possession. I would carry it up to the valley of the "Puerco," if you please; and with the distinguished Senator from Missouri, [Col. BENTON] I would fix it there, and by a line drawn from thence direct to the southwest corner of the ancient boundary of New Mexico, at the point where the thirty-second parallel of north latitude crosses the hundredth degree of west longitude, and thence north to the Red river. Beyond this line, Texas has not the shadow of claim. It belongs to the United States, and it is our duty to retain it. But, above all, I would maintain the ancient boundaries of New Mexico, without encroachment or diminution.

Whatever arguments and pretences may be set up by Texas to the country on the "Lower Rio Grande," or even in Coahuila, there is none whatever in regard to New Mexico. Texas made but one attempt to conquer that State. She sent an army there in 1837, but every man was killed or captured—not one was left to carry back the sad news to Texas. For a hundred and fifty years the Government of New Mexico has existed. Through the whole extent of her ancient boundaries, she has exerted her power, and executed her laws. Her identity, and her boundaries, have been maintained to this day—to this hour.

But the bill on your table proposes to divide her territory; to give a portion to Texas; to separate

and parcel her out after the manner in which prostrate Poland was divided, and her name blotted from the list of European powers. The people of New Mexico loathe and abhor the Texans. They have long been enemies—the most deadly hatred exists between them. To deliver them up to Texas would be a greater outrage than that of surrendering the people of Poland to their oppressors. By our treaty with Mexico, we are bound to protect the inhabitants of New Mexico. Sir, I would do it to the full extent of our obligations, if there be power in our army, our navy, and in our militia, sufficient to effect that object.

The eastern boundary of New Mexico cannot be disputed by Texas. She has never carried her settlements nor her laws within a hundred miles of that line. The bill on your table proposes to commence the east line of New Mexico where the 100th degree of west longitude crosses the Red river, and from thence south to 30° 30' north latitude; thence west to the 103d degree west longitude; and thence south to where the 103d degree west longitude crosses the 32d degree of north latitude; thence west to the Rio Grande. This would give Texas some forty thousand square miles of territory belonging to New Mexico, and nearly twenty thousand which belonged to Chihuahua and Coahuila, of which she never had the shadow of possession.

New, sir, why are we called on to consign this large portion of New Mexico, of Chihuahua, and Coahuila, to slavery? Can any reason be assigned? No other than this: the slave power demands it, and northern servility is ready to obey. Texan laws were never in force there. This territory was conquered by our arms and paid for by our treasure.

Mr. Polk, in his annual message of 1846, declares that "New Mexico, with its capital, Santa Fé, had been captured by our arms." He, sir, regarded New Mexico as an unit, a State with its capital; as conquered from the enemy; not as belonging to Texas. The absurd thought of its being a portion of Texas had not entered the Executive mind. But we are now told that it belonged to Texas after she declared it so in 1836. It is certain that Mr. Polk did not regard it such. He did not enforce Texan laws; nor did he pay any regard whatever to Texan authority. No, sir; he established a military code of laws. The system bore no similitude to that of Texas. It was the code of New Mexico. Under it claims were litigated: criminals were tried, convicted, and executed. To this day those laws are in force. They have been maintained and executed throughout New Mexico. This was done by a Democratic Administration. We are now called on under a Whig Administration to surrender up a portion of this territory, and to purchase the remainder at ten millions dollars. *Will we do it?* After giving Texas one half, we are called on to pay her for the other a greater sum than the *whole* of Texas and New Mexico are both worth. And this we are told is to be done by aid of "Whig votes." I hope, for the honor of the Whig party, that these intimations are unfounded.

Why, sir, to this hour, no northern Whig ever admitted that Texas possessed a shadow of claim to any portion of this territory. Indeed those northern Whigs who now urge the passage of this bill, do not pretend that Texas has any right or title

to any portion of New Mexico. All northern members of that party, both in and out of Congress, wholly and totally deny such right. The only reason assigned for thus delivering up this free territory to the curse of slavery, is to pacify Texas, and appease the slave power: to quiet their clamor: to induce Texas to abstain from dissolving the Union: to purchase clemency and mercy at her hands. Let those northern members vote for that measure, whose spirit and feelings are so abject, so servile as to as to permit them; but surely no independent statesman will do it.

Texas urges, that on her statute book she had claimed all the territory east of the Rio Grande, from its mouth to its source; that when we annexed her to this Union and assumed her war, and proceeded to conquer and purchase New Mexico, we did it as her agent, agreeable to certain legal fictions that are regarded as authority by justices of the peace and by county courts; that by legal technicality, she has obtained an advantage over us; and we are referred to certain legal principles found in Blackstone's Commentaries and Espinasse's *Nisi Prius*.

Gentlemen forget that we sit here with supreme authority, limited only by the Constitution, and bound down by no technicalities. No one pretends there is either truth or justice in this legal fiction. We came here to make laws—to legislate upon the enduring principles of truth, guided by the dictates of righteousness—to deal out equal justice to all under our jurisdiction. Let us do it faithfully and fearlessly. I would extend to Texas the same justice which we deal out to ourselves, or to New Mexico; but for us to go beyond that, and take this Territory from New Mexico and give it to Texas, would be downright, unqualified robbery.

Again, Mr. Chairman, if this territory belong to Texas, let her have it. I would not keep it from her. If it be a portion of New Mexico, it belongs to us, and none but a craven heart would surrender it. Yet, sir, we are told that it is to be done by *Whig* votes. Let the degrading act be consummated; let northern honor be surrendered; but let those who do it place their names upon record; let this act go to the country; let the North know who it is that betrays her interests, and the interests of humanity.

You, Mr. Chairman, belong to one section of our Union—I to another. Whatever belongs to you under the Constitution, I am willing you should enjoy; whatever belongs to the people of the North, shall never be surrendered by my vote, or with my consent. I repudiate and detest the policy of surrendering up portion of our rights, in order to purchase a recognition of other interests. Such policy belongs not to independent freemen.

But, sir, the worst feature of this bill is that which proposes to purchase of Texas this territory which already belongs to us; which was first conquered and then purchased from Mexico. This ten millions of money is to be drawn from the pockets of our people and handed over to Texas; not because she has any shadow of title to this territory; not for any property or jurisdiction she possesses there—no such thing is urged by northern men. Why, then, shall we pay her that vast amount? The only answer is, we must do it “*to save the Union!*” To buy of Texas the privilege

of continuing this Government! To induce her to remain with us, and not to sever the tender and interesting relations existing between her and the other States. Why, sir, they were brought into connection with us for the purpose of making northern freemen sustain her slavery; and now we are to be taxed ten millions dollars for the privilege of supporting this vilest system of oppression that ever disgraced civilized man.

Mr. HOWARD said, that Texas did not seek annexation to the United States; nor does she ask compensation for the territory; nor was he certain that she would take it.

Mr. GIDDINGS. It cannot have escaped the recollection of any member, that Texas in 1837, sent her agent here to solicit annexation to our Union!

Mr. HOWARD. But she withdrew it.

Mr. GIDDINGS. And waited until she could induce our “charge d'affaires,” Mr. Murphy, to recommend her annexation to this Union. And as to accepting the money, I wish she might reject the offer if tendered. But during the whole session has she not, by her agent, like the daughters of the horse-leech, cried Give, give, give? Her Senators voted for this bill to tax the people of the free States to the very modest amount of ten millions of dollars, and to give it over to the holders of Texas scrip. Had not those Senators voted for the bill, it would have been defeated. But, sir, who is Texas, that she should make such demands of this Government? How came she to be a member of this Confederacy? The treaty-making power, the only constitutional tribunal capable of admitting her as a member of this Confederacy, rejected the application. She then “climbed up some other way.” She consented to come in by joint resolution, which, as the present Secretary of State then showed, was entirely unconstitutional, null and void. The resolutions may be repealed to-morrow, or at any moment when a majority of the two Houses shall think best. That would leave Texas as we found her. She now holds no constitutional position here: nor have her Representatives any more right under the Constitution to hold seats in this Hall, than have the subjects of the Grand Sultan, or of the Emperor of Russia. Yet she attempts to lay the nation under contribution for her aggrandizement. If she were to ask for ten or fifteen millions as a consideration for leaving us—for going out of the Union—for ceasing to trouble us, I might, perhaps, vote for it. But I will never consent to give her the first dime to retain her in the Union.

Sir, can we, can our constituents forget the consequences of her annexation?—the long, bloody, piratical war in which it involved us? the hundred and fifty millions dollars debt which she entailed upon us? the thirty thousand valuable lives she cost us? And shall we now crown this series of outrages upon the free States, by paying her ten millions of dollars for thus bringing upon us the curse and crimes of such a war—and of slavery?

Mr. HOWARD. Why does the gentleman seek to send an army to Texas, if we do not belong to the Union?

Mr. GIDDINGS. I never thought of sending an army to Texas. I am a peace man. I abhor offensive wars; and if Texas pleases to go out of the Union, she shall never be called to an account for it by force of arms, if my vote or influence can

prevent it. But I believe in the right and duty of self-defence, and I would bring the whole military force of the nation to the defence of New Mexico, if necessary to preserve her boundaries and to protect her people; and I would welcome every hostile Texan who comes there with arms in his hands, to a "hospitable grave." While I say this, I repeat that I would oppose the march of an army to Texas, or to any other State who may secede from the Union. I would not seek to compel them to remain with us by force of arms. I do not believe in a government of bayonets and of gunpowder at this age of the world. The people and each State must govern themselves; or if they see fit to leave the Union, I would say, "Go in peace, and may the blessing of God rest upon you." I would neither shoot them, nor cut their throats for thinking they can do better out of the Union than in it. But when they shall once have left the Union, I will never consent to their return, until they shall become so far civilized and christianized as to purify themselves from the contagion of slavery. These are my views in regard to attempting to hold States in this Union by fear of the sword. Our Union cannot be preserved in that way. It must be sustained by making it the dispenser of constitutional justice to all the States, the instrument for maintaining the rights of all.

Sir, the payment of this ten millions of dollars constituted the most objectionable feature of the "omnibus bill." It is designed to raise Texas scrip from fifteen cents upon the dollar to "par value;" to make every dollar of Texas scrip worth six and a half; to make many splendid fortunes in a short time; to rob the people, the laboring men of the nation, of this vast sum, and place it in the hands of "stock-jobbers" and "gamblers in Texas scrip." And this is said to be *Whig* policy—the policy of the new Administration! Such is the language of the President's organ of this morning. I hope it is not the case. I am unwilling to believe it. This policy is a strong and direct appeal to those members, if any, who are interested in Texan stocks. If I knew it were true that one or two million dollars was owned by individuals on this floor, I should regard the fate of the bill as settled; but it would not be in order, under parliamentary rules, to suppose such a fact to exist. I therefore would not insinuate it; yet should the bill pass, I shall ever believe that considerations, unseen by the public eye, have coöperated with Executive influence to produce that result.* I do not believe the President's favor sufficient, at this time, to secure the support of a majority of the House for such an object.

*Mr. Edward Curtis, of New York, is said to have spent most of his time in Washington city during the winter, both before and after the proposition to pay this vast sum to Texas was reported in the "omnibus bill." He is said to hold a million of dollars in Texas scrip. He is reported to be a shrewd politician, and a warm personal friend of the Secretary of State. Mr. Hiram Ketchum, also of New York, might be seen almost any day, since the bill came from the Senate, sitting within the bar of the House engaged in conversation with members. He is said to be the brother of a distinguished broker in Wall street; somewhat prominent as a politician, and a very earnest supporter of the present Administration. Several other gentlemen have for some time been hanging about the city, supposed to hold relations to Texas stocks somewhat interesting.

Since the insertion of the above note, Mr. Curtis called on me and assured me that he had never purchased any Texas stock, and that he had not acted as agent of those who hold stock, and that he originally subscribed for only five hundred dollars of the Texas loan. J. R. GIDDINGS.

Sir, certain Senators in the other end of the Capitol have for months been endeavoring to convince the people of the necessity of passing the "omnibus bill," as it is called. No arguments could be raised in favor of that measure, for it was not founded on reason. One consideration alone was pressed upon the public mind. The cry was raised that "*the Union was in danger!*" The newspapers here responded, "*the Union is in danger!*" The country press repeated the alarm. The cry was caught up and echoed by every timid, faltering paltoon of the North. Petitions to "save the Union" were circulated. Public meetings were held in our commercial cities where Texas scrip was mostly influential, and resolutions were adopted "*to save the Union.*" Fourth of July orations were delivered, and theological pamphlets were published, and morning prayers were put up in this Hall to "*save the Union.*" The supplications were not that we, "*may legislate in righteousness,*" deal out justice and mercy to those who are oppressed and degraded by our laws. These were regarded as objects of trifling importance when compared with the pending danger that *Texas would dissolve the Union.* Indeed, they are never mentioned by our chaplain.

Sir, I am nauseated, sickened at this moral and political effeminacy; this downright moral and political cowardice. It is unworthy of American statesmen. Our constituents sent us here to maintain and defend their rights; not to surrender them; not to make ourselves and our people tributary to Texas. In electing us, they had no expectation that we would turn upon them and violently thrust our hands into their pockets and take therefrom ten millions of dollars, and hand it over to the slaveholders of Texas, for territory which belongs to us, and to which Texas never had any title whatever.

Sir, gentlemen here may say what they please—the people have no fears of a dissolution of the Union. They understand this kind of gasconade. The cry of "dissolution" has been the dernier resort of southern men for fifty years, whenever they desired to frighten doughfaces into a compliance with their measures. It may alarm gentlemen here; but I do not think you can find in northern Ohio an equal number of nervous old women or of love-sick girls, who could be moved by it.

Again, it is said that we must stop this agitation in relation to slavery! The people see us here passing laws to enslave our fellow men; to sell women in open market; to create a traffic in the bodies of children. They know this to be opposed to the self-evident truth that "all men are created equal," and "that governments are constituted to sustain that equality of rights;" and they converse on the subject, examine the reasons on which such traffic is based, and vote for men who will oppose such barbarous practices. This is called *agitation*; and gentlemen here talk of suppressing it by passing such laws as that on your table. This is the manner in which we are to stop the progress of truth; to seal the lips of philanthropists; and to silence the voice of humanity. Yes, sir; it is gravely proposed that we should set bounds to the human intellect, and to limit political investigations by statute laws.

Sir, the great founder of our holy religion, when he proclaimed the heaven-born truths of his

Gospel, was denounced as an "agitator." He was arrested, condemned, and executed, for asserting truths which the Scribes and Pharisees were too stupid to comprehend. It was done to stop agitation; but truth, emanating from "The Holy One," has extended, spread, and progressed, and will "go on conquering and to conquer," in spite of all the political Scribes and Pharisees in Congress, and the quaking and trembling of doughfaces here and elsewhere.

This progress in morals, and in political intelligence, is in strict accordance with the law of our being, and cannot be prevented. The idea of setting bounds to the human intellect, of circumscribing it by statute law, is most preposterous. Why not limit the arts and sciences by conservative legislation as well as moral and political progress? Why not follow the example of those who attempted to stop the agitation of Galileo when he proclaimed the truth of our solar system, and the laws by which the planets are retained in their orbits? He caused great agitation, and was excommunicated for his infidelity, in thus daring to proclaim truths which the conservatives of that age were too ignorant to comprehend. It required two hundred and fifty years for the stupid clergy of that day to understand the truths for which he had been expelled from their christian fellowship. How long it will require certain theological professors of the present day to comprehend the "self-evident truths" of man's equality is not yet determined. Or how long it will require our political doctors to comprehend the very obvious fact that an educated and reflecting people *will think and act for themselves*, is yet to be ascertained.

But if we are to have conservative legislation, let us tear down the telegraphic wires, break up your galvanic batteries, and imprison Morse, and stop all agitation upon the subject of your "magnetic railroads of thought." Lay up your steamboats, place setters upon your locomotives, convert your railroads into cultivated fields, and erase the name of Fulton from our history. Go down to yonder Institute; drive Page from his laboratory, break in pieces his galvanic engines, and unchain the imprisoned lightning which is there pent up; then pass an act of Congress prohibiting all further agitation on these subjects, and thus carry out your conservative principles, of which some men are continually boasting. Sir, this, above all others, is an age of progress. Look at the peasantry of Europe. They are struggling against oppression. Ground down by the iron heel of despotism for centuries, they are rising in their might and teaching tyrants to understand the power that dwells with the people. While these political revolutions were convulsing kingdoms, overturning thrones—while crowns were tossed about like the baubles of children—Le Verrier, alone in his study, was agitating a question of science. By a course of observations and mathematical calculations, he demonstrated the existence of another planet; far, far away in unlimited space, infinitely beyond the utmost bounds to which even the thoughts of former astronomers had extended. So, sir, the philosophical statesmen of our own land; reasoning from past observations, and drawing reasonable deductions for the future, see clearly in the distance the star of freedom, shining and glittering in resplendent splendor, far beyond those regions of thought within which the mind of our

political savans are accustomed to revolve. Those savans and political doctors will talk of "conservatism," and of "quieting agitation." They are behind the age in which they live; and there they will probably remain.

I know it is said that we must quiet these agitations before Congress will act upon a tariff, and other old party issues. Let me assure gentlemen that revolutions never go backward. It is too late in the day to make intelligent men believe that you have any very pure regard for the laboring men of New England, while you sustain laws here to sell the laboring men and women of this District, like brutes in the market; that you have any real intention to pass laws for the relief of the laboring men of the North while you keep in force laws for carrying on a coastwise commerce in the bodies of southern laborers. Such pretences are shallow, and no intelligent man will regard them as sincere.

But I ask gentlemen if they really feel capable of convincing the people of the North that it is our duty to give Texas a large portion of New Mexico, and then pay her ten millions of dollars for taking it? Let gentlemen go to the dairymen, the farmers and mechanics of northern Ohio—and nine out of every ten are as correct judges as we are of the boundaries of New Mexico, and of the propriety of maintaining them, as well as of admitting California, and New Mexico when she presents her constitution. They will judge for themselves, too, when we take from their pockets ten millions of dollars for Texas. I should like to hear gentlemen who now advocate this bill undertake to make those farmers and mechanics believe that it is their duty to contribute a portion of the substance, accumulated by their toil, to make up this tribute to Texas. I imagine they would find the task a difficult one.

Sir, if you wish to ~~arrest agitation~~ among them, pass that bill! Take from their hard earnings this ten millions of money and pay it over to Texas; and I will promise you *agitation, increased agitation*. Let northern men vote thus to render their constituents tributary to Texas, and such Representatives will find agitation at home; agitation that, like Banquo's ghost, will not "down at their bidding."

For seven months we have been debating the admission of California. Her Senators and Representatives have been waiting here, respectfully asking admission, to which there is no real objection. But that subject has been delayed, postponed, and put off, from time to time, without any earthly excuse. Northern Whigs and northern Democrats were not prepared to act upon this matter. They desired to wait for the Senate to act upon it. It has been in vain that we have called on them, and solicited and importuned them to act on this plainest of all questions ever presented to this body. Well, sir, the bills admitting California have been laid aside in both Houses, and this bill to give Texas a State carved from New Mexico, and to tax our people to supply the coffers of Texas, is on your table; and the very men who have urged further delay in regard to California, after the bill had been discussed for seven months, now turn round and are willing to pass this most objectionable measure without discussion. These sudden changes of position appear unaccountable to those who are not initiated

into such political mysteries. Why is this delay of one measure, and this hot haste to dispose of another? Why, sir, there is but one answer—the slave power commands; and northern servility obeys.

We are told that the President is anxious for the settlement of these questions, and his late message shows such to be the case. To this message I will now ask a moment's attention.

So far as it treats of our rights to the entire Territory of New Mexico, and the duties of the Executive to protect and defend the people and Territory until Congress shall dispose of the subject, its doctrine is sound and its argument conclusive. To this extent I believe the people of the free States, including all political parties, will sustain and uphold the doctrines of the message; and they will stand ready at all times to aid and assist the President in carrying them into effect.

Sir, I take this opportunity to declare, that neither myself nor the political friends with whom I act, are disposed to make war on any man or any party. We are contending for what we deem great and paramount principles; and so far as the President and his party shall carry out our doctrines, we shall rejoice to act with him; and whenever he or his party departs from the essential doctrines on which our Government rests, or adopts a policy opposed to justice or to the rights of the people, we shall freely express our disapprobation and make known our objections. We shall expose his errors with the same freedom that we sustain him when right. I therefore repeat, and I take pleasure in saying, that to the extent before stated, the message is right and satisfactory, and will be supported.

But when the President goes on to describe the dangers arising to our Union from the blustering of Texas, and more than intimates the propriety of our paying Texas for a portion of New Mexico, merely to purchase her silence, and to hire her not to intimidate us, I feel constrained to say that I regard such intimations unworthy of his high station. It is undignified, and bespeaks a timidity unbecoming the Chief Magistrate of a mighty nation. No man can mistake the President's anxiety for the safety of the Union, which none ought for a moment to regard as endangered; and his anxiety also to make peace with Texas, without very particular regard to the terms on which it shall be obtained, is too apparent to be misunderstood.

Every attentive reader of the message must be satisfied that it begins with General Taylor's policy, and ends with that of the Secretary of State. It begins boldly, but ends pusillanimously. It commences by a fair maintenance of our rights, and closes by advising us to purchase safety of Texas. It opens by informing Texas that she must submit to constitutional authority, and concludes by intimating that she shall be well paid if she will abide in the Union with us.

The message was most evidently intended to facilitate the passage of the bills to which I have referred. Indeed, the *National Intelligencer*, the organ of the President, comes out this morning giving a programme of our action upon these measures. It not only informs its readers that these objectionable bills are to pass this body, but it descends to the detail, and gives us distinctly to understand that they are to be acted upon "in the

order in which the Senate sends them to us." It gives us the assurance that this bill giving up a portion of New Mexico to Texas, and paying her ten millions to take it, is in perfect accordance with the Executive views. We are also told that we are to have no further delay, that the session ought to be brought to a close, and that these bills must not detain Congress at this season of the year.

Well, sir, these admonitions, coming from such a quarter, are surely worthy of consideration. I have this morning heard it suggested that the whole thing was arranged and agreed "pon before the "compromise bill" was defeated in the Senate. That leading members at both ends of the Capitol concluded to force these bills through this body under the screw of the previous question, without discussing or amending them. And this, I understand, is to be effected by "Whig votes." I shall await these movements with great interest. To this day, as I have remarked, the entire Whig party of the North has at all times and under all circumstances denied that Texas possesses title to any portion of New Mexico. I am unwilling to believe they will now throw a political somerset, and admit that she has a title there, and vote for paying her ten millions of dollars for it; but we shall see what we shall see."

Representatives here have learned that there is a power not behind, but above the throne—one that will command obedience even from the President himself. When General Taylor first ascended the presidential chair he was anxious for the establishment of civil governments in California and New Mexico. All will recollect his anxiety to save the people there from the government's bowie-knife and pistol.

Sir, a few Free-Soilers, aided by Whigs and Democrats, resisted the establishment of such governments unless slavery were excluded. The indignant frowns of the President were threatened to be poured out upon the free-soil party, if they again opposed that measure. These threats had no effect. Free-Soilers and the people stood firm. General Taylor saw the course of public sentiment, and wisely changed his policy, and himself opposed the establishment of civil governments in our Territories, to which the whole Whig party responded Amen. General Taylor now sleeps with his fathers. "Peace to his ashes." But a generation of Whigs has now risen up, who seem not to have known General Taylor, or his policy, who now turn their backs upon his plan and vote for civil governments in Utah and New Mexico without any exclusion of slavery. Well, Mr. Chairman, it is the duty of the soldier to face to the right, or to the left, or to right about, according to the word of the drill-sergeant. We shall soon have the opportunity of witnessing the manner in which these subsidized troops obey the word, and how many Whigs will now "take their turn upon the springboard," and give us specimens of "ground and lofty tumbling."

This, sir, was the principal object for which I rose. I wished to call the attention of the House and of the country to the alacrity with which members here change their position, and vote in direct opposition to their former profession. Why, sir, it is known to the whole country, that two years since the entire Whig party North stood pledged to the establishment of governments in our Territories with the proviso excluding slavery. I think

on various occasions every Northern Whig member voted for it. The proviso or no proviso, was the issue in all the northern States in the presidential canvass of 1848. On this issue General Taylor was elected, and General Cass was defeated. When General Taylor avowed his doctrine of non-action, the Whigs changed their position and sustained that policy. Now, sir, we are told they are to take one step more: They must go for territorial governments in Utah and New Mexico without the proviso. This, we are told, is the plan agreed upon—one which is warmly advocated by the organs of the party here. This will bring them, as a party, entirely round into the loco-foco doctrines of General Cass in 1848.

These measures—that is, the establishment of civil government in Utah and New Mexico; the establishment of the boundary line between Texas and New Mexico; and, to crown all, a bill for compelling northern freemen to become the catchpoles of southern slaveholders, were all suggested by the present Secretary of State, some five months since, while a member of the Senate. They were then regarded as odious by nine-tenths of the entire Whig party North. They were then looked upon with disgust, and their author with general disfavor. He is now at the head of the Cabinet. All his measures, odious as they are, are now pressed upon Congress, sustained by the Executive organ, and said to be a part of the Executive policy. I hope it is not so; I am unwilling to believe it; yet when I look back to the avowals of the Secretary of State while in the Senate, and bear in mind that he was selected to the Premiership while openly advocating these measures—when I see them sustained by his leading and confidential friends in this Hall, and in the other end of the Capitol, and by leading Whig papers, I am unable to resist the conviction that the President favors them. I am conscious that he cannot do it from a love of slavery. His message unfolds the secretly operating cause. It is the fear of domestic violence, of civil war with Texas.

Southern gasconade has excited alarm in older men than the President. It has been the usual weapon with which to assail the North for the last fifty years. I think the time has arrived when it should be disregarded by the President, and by Congress. If Texas and other southern States have determined to secede from the Union, the paying of ten millions of dollars will satisfy them only for the moment: other and more extravagant demands will soon be made. Indeed we know, that most of the southern malcontents make the rejection of California the test of abiding in the Union. They assure us that the Union shall be dissolved if California be admitted. To yield to these demands, is to admit that we have no Government, nor an association that is competent to exercise the functions of a Government. And this vast sum which we are to pay Texas, is to reward her for abiding in the Union. No northern man pretends the money is to be paid for any other purpose. Those who advocate its payment, all admit it is to "buy our peace" with her. If she remain with us, she will do so for hire—for a compensation paid by northern men.

Sir, I have no language to express the feelings which this proposition creates in my own mind. Those who wield the government of Texas, must

have great contempt for her people, or they would not for a moment attempt to sell her allegiance in this manner. And we, sir, must hold them as exceedingly degraded, or we would not attempt to purchase their fidelity by dollars and cents.

Of what possible benefit can Texas be to this Union? Since she professed to belong to it, we have been at constant and heavy expense to protect her against the miserable hordes of savages who infest her borders. For the transportation of her mails, the people of our free States pay a heavy sum yearly; and the keeping up of custom-houses requires a large annual appropriation beyond all the revenue they collect. We are constrained to pay our judges, marshals, and district attorneys for that State, in order to maintain a judiciary there. In short, under ordinary circumstance, every laborer of the North pays from his earnings an annual contribution to maintain the government of Texas. We all know these facts; and that from the nature of her soil and population, she will probably continue to be an expense to us for the next half century. And now we are called on to pay her ten millions dollars for the privilege of continuing this yearly burden upon our people. Why, sir, this was all foreseen at the time of her annexation, and the policy of forming a union with her was based upon the expectation that "it would extend and perpetuate slavery." If, therefore, we pay this money, it must be paid for that purpose. This truth should be distinctly understood by every northern man. I repeat, sir, I would not give dime to retain her in the Union. But if this money be paid her, let it be the reward for her leaving the Union, not for remaining in it. I can scarcely conceive of a proposition more insulting to northern freemen than this proposal to pay this money to Texas.

Before I conclude, it is due to myself and to the political friends with whom I act, that I should say, we have done all in our power to avoid the present aspect of this question. It was our wish to have disposed of the California bill at an early day, and in the ordinary course of legislation. We foresaw the difficulties now before us, and endeavored to avoid them. But gentlemen now in favor of this measure were anxious to delay final action in regard to the admission of California. That important measure, in regard to which our duties were so plain, has been put off, and delayed in every possible manner. Never has the indecision, the timidity of northern members been more conspicuously manifested than on that bill. Look to your Journal and note the early hour at which we have daily adjourned. The history of congressional legislation furnishes no parallel. Never has this body sat so few hours in each day, or done so little business in a given number of hours. Never has any bill before this body been so long delayed as that admitting California; none was ever so often postponed and set aside for other matters. To these postponements and delays I and the few friends with whom I usually act, have been opposed. We have exerted our influence to obtain final action on that question, but we failed to effect our object. We were urged to await the action of the Senate, to see what they would do in regard to it. Well, sir, counsels other than ours have prevailed. We have awaited the action of the Senate: they have sent us a bill establishing a civil government in Utah, and this bill to estab-

lish the boundaries of Texas and New Mexico. These in the order of business, now precede the bill admitting California—we must act on them first. And we are told plainly that if we pass these bills, we may then take up and pass that admitting California. But we are also assured that if we reject these bills "*California shall not be admitted;*" that southern gentlemen will, by a factious course here, defeat all attempts to legislate on that subject; in other words, we must pass this bill giving to Texas money to pay her ten millions of debt, or our Government is to be brought to

an end. We are to legislate under this kind of duress. Sir, I stand here as a free man, the representative of freemen. Thank God, I represent no slaves. I feel conscious that I could offer my constituency no greater insult than to vote for this bill—I shall not do it. If the stability of our Union were to depend on the passage of that bill I would spurn it with indignation. Never, sir, under any combination of influences, of interests, or of political considerations, will I consent to the passage of any law taxing the people of Ohio to pay the debts of Texas.

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